THE DISCOURSE

Which Carried the

PRÆMIUM

AT

The ACADEMY of *DIJON*,

in MDCCL.

On this QUESTION,

Propos'd by the ſaid Academy,

Whether the Re-eſtabliſhment of ARTS *and* SCIENCES *has contributed to the refining of Manners.*

By a Citizen of GENEVA.

Barbarus hic ego ſum, quia non intelligor illis. Ovid.

Tranſlated from the FRENCH Original.

DUBLIN:

Printed by RICHARD JAMES, at *Newton's-Head* in *Dame-ſtreet*, 1751.

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THE

Tranſlator's Preface.

THE following diſcourſe has made ſuch a noiſe in *France*, that I thought it, for its ſingularity, well worth the tranſlating: it muſt be own'd to be one of the fineſt modern pieces of oratory, and of ſo dangerous a perſuaſion, that if the author, inſtead of giving it in writing, had pronounced it, with all the force, which the fluency of tongue, and the graces of action uſually add to ſuch orations in publick, I ſhould tremble for all the libraries of *Europe*, and dread his elocution almoſt as much as the fire and ſwords of *Goths*, *Vandals*, and *Muſſulmen*.

All I can learn of the author is, that his name is *Rouſſeau*, and that

he is, as he ſays, of *Geneva*, or of ſome place in the neighbourhood of *Switzerland*. I alſo have been aſſured, that when the Preſident of the academy acquainted him with the ſucceſs of his piece, it was in theſe, or the like words: "Sir, the academy have crowned your diſcourſe, "for its elegance and purity of language; and have overlooked your "ſentiments, becauſe of your country."

We may ſee by theſe words, that the academy judged, as mankind muſt, that he undertook the wrong ſide of the queſtion, and, like the ſcholar at the Jeſuits, deſerved the prize and the rod. —— I was really at a loſs, for a time, to find his ſincere opinion, but his preface and notes, in ſupport of his theſis, convinced me, that he ſpoke his mind; I was therefore once reſolved to ſuperadd a few critical remarks upon him,

him, to ſhew how abſurd his tenets were, and detect the art with which he would defeat art; but upon a more mature deliberation, I feared I might be laughed at, like the Prelate, who gravely undertook to prove that there was no Pope *Joan*; or one who ſhould ſeriouſly argue againſt the ravings of *Hobbs*, *Agrippa*, *Spinoſa*, or *Noſtradamus*, and ſo deſiſted from the undertaking; I thought it ſufficient to ſay two words by way of advertiſement to the reader.

This gentleman would have us believe, that the arts and ſciences have injured our morals and manners, and therefore would have them, and their profeſſors, baniſhed. But has he forgot that man, in all climates born naked and defenceleſs, cannot at all ſubſiſt without arts, nor, with any comfort, without ſciences; his ſituation and capacity prove beyond doubt, that they were

by Providence intended to be improved by him: Is not art neceſſary for his feeding, cloathing, lodging, and defence? and is his daring mind a proof, that ſome ſcience was ordered for his recreation, and ſome for cultivating the land in proper ſeaſons for his proviſions?

Was it not by art that *Hannibal* raiſed a reputation? and were *Xenophon*, *Epaminondas*, *Cæſar*, and all the famous *Grecians* and *Romans* ignorant of arts and ſciences? And ſince this man would raiſe War into a divinity belonging to Ignorance, how came it that the Barbarians could not ſtand before them? And if ignorance increaſed ſtrength and valour, ſurely all our common ſoldiers, nay, and a vaſt majority of our officers, ought to be heroes. He frets at the *European* or *French* politeneſs; but upon his own ſyſtem, and allowing his hypotheſis, that it is all counterfeit,

feit, is it not yet better that the rude, harſh, and different characters of men ſhould be veiled under, even a falſe urbanity and affected mild manners, than that an eternity of broils ſhould diſturb ſociety, by each ſavage mind's being viſible in all its uncouth and unpoliſhed behaviour? Is it not a happineſs that I ſhall be, even outwardly, well uſed by thoſe from whom I expect no more? or would he prefer travelling among the banditti *Arabs*, or his own ſavages of *America*, before a tour through *Europe*? and if the latter muſt be pronounced the moſt agreeable, and that the arts and ſciences are the cauſe of the difference, what becomes of his goddeſs, Ignorance? In ſhort, he had taken a laudable ſubject if he had only laſhed the abuſes, which are ever the unfortunate attendants on all great ſyſtems: but to run down the ſun becauſe he ſometimes ſcorches, or

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the rain becauſe it ſometimes falls to excels, contains hardly any thing more delirious than what this orator has ſeriouſly undertaken; like *John* in the tale of the Tub, he tears the coat to pieces becauſe of a few uſeleſs embroideries; and yet it muſt be confeſſed, his argument is worthy of admiration for its compoſition and elegance, and may be conſidered by thoſe of his own opinion (if any) as a proof of the danger of arts and ſciences, ſince, by their help, ſo much could be made of the worſt of cauſes.

I have endeavoured to keep up to his ſpirit in the tranſlation; and if the *Engliſh* reader finds any thing ſtriking in it, I ſhall put him in mind of the unſucceſsful *Grecian* orator, when he heard his adverſary's oration praiſed on the reading, and, cry out, almoſt in his words, "What would it "be, if you underſtood the original?"

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The AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THIS is one of the finest and most important questions that hath ever been discuss'd: we are not here to debate on those metaphysical subtilties, which have intruded into all the branches of literature, and from which the very academical occupations are not always exempt; no, we are this day upon one of those truths which are inseparably annex'd to the happiness of mankind.— I foresee I shall be severely attacked for having dared to appear on the side I undertake: I can expect no less than an universal outcry against me, for my audacious attempt at overthrowing the delight and admiration of mankind; nor is the approbation of a few wise men a sufficient warrant against the censure of the publick: but I have taken my party, for I value not what the wits or gentlemen of the mode can object

object to me. There will always ſubſiſt men who ſeem born to be ſlaves to the opinions of their age, their country, their ſociety.

Some, who this day act the Free-thinkers, ſceptick unbelievers, and philoſophers, would, for the ſame reaſons, have paſs'd for Fanaticks in the days of the league in France; *no one therefore, who has a mind to outlive his works, ſhould write for ſuch readers.*

I conclude with one word more;—not expecting the honour done me, I had, ſince my ſending it to the Preſs, altered and augmented this diſcourſe ſo as almoſt to have made it another work; but now I find myſelf obliged to publiſh it in the ſame dreſs in which it was crowned. I have only ſubjoined a few notes, and inſerted two additions eaſy to be remarked, which in ſpeaking might have diſpleaſed the Academy. I judged that equity, reſpect, and acknowledgment required this laſt advertiſement.

THE

THE

DISCOURSE

WHICH

Carried the PRÆMIUM

AT THE

ACADEMY of *Dijon*, in 1750.

Decipimur Specie recti——

"HAS the re-eſtabliſhment of arts and "ſciences contributed to purge or "corrupt our manners?" This is the queſtion in debate; which ſide ſhall I take, Gentlemen? That which becomes an honeſt man who knows nothing, and is not aſham'd to own it.

I foreſee the difficulty of appropiating what I have to ſay to the tribunal I appear before. How ſhall I dare to depreciate the ſciences in the preſence of one of the moſt learned Aſſemblies in *Europe?* Run out into the praiſes of ignorance in the midſt of a celebrated Academy; or reconcile my diſdain for ſtudy with the reſpect due to the truly learned? I ſaw theſe difficulties, but was not deterr'd by them. 'Tis not the Sciences, ſaid

I to myſelf, that I attack, 'tis the Cauſe of Virtue that I ſupport before virtuous judges; honour, honeſty, and probity, are dearer to good men than erudition to even the learned ---What then have I to dread? The penetration of the honourable aſſembly, before whom I ſpeak, I own, is to be fear'd: but it is more for the conſtruction of the oration, than for the ſentiments of the orator; equitable ſovereigns never heſitate to condemn themſelves in all doubtful caſes; and the happieſt ſituation for a juſt cauſe is, to be admitted to a defence where its upright and learned adverſary is judge.---If to this motive, which has encouraged me, another be wanting, let it be, that after having, to the beſt of my ſkill, defended the truth, whatever my ſucceſs may be, there is a prize which cannot fail me, I ſhall find it at the bottom of my own heart.

The FIRST PART.

IT is a beautiful noble proſpect to view man, as it were, riſing again from nothing by his own efforts; diſſipating, by the light of his reaſon, all the thick clouds in which nature had involv'd him; mounting above himſelf: ſoaring in thought even to the celeſtial regions; marching like the ſun, with giant ſtrides around the vaſt univerſe;

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verſe; and, what is ſtill grander and more wonderful, re-entering into himſelf to ſtudy man, to drive into his nature, his duties, his end. All theſe wonders have been renew'd within theſe few laſt generations.

Europe was relapſed into the barbarity of the firſt ages; the inhabitants of that part of the world, which now makes ſo great a figure in knowlege, were plung'd, ſome centuries ago, into a ſtate which was worſe than utter ignorance. A certain ſchool jargon, more deſpicable than ignorance itſelf, had uſurped the name of knowledge, and oppoſed an almoſt invincible obſtacle to its reſtoration, a revolution became neceſſary to lead people back into common ſenſe: and it came at laſt from the corner of the world the leaſt ſuſpected; it was the ſtupid Muſſulman, the ſworn enemy to letters, that caus'd their revival among us. The fall of *Conſtantine*'s throne brought the relicks of antient *Greece* into *Italy*; *France* in her turn was enrich'd by the precious ſpoils; the ſciences ſoon follow'd letters, and the art of thinking was join'd to that of writing: this gradation ſeems ſtrange, but it is perhaps but too natural; and men began to feel the principal advantage accruing from the love of the Muſes, that of rendering mankind more ſociable by inſpiring the thirſt of pleaſing each other by works worthy of mutual approbation.

There

There are neceſſaries for the mind, as well as for the body; theſe are the foundation of ſociety, thoſe its ornament. Whilſt the government and laws provide for the ſafety and well-being of a people aſſembled; the ſciences, letters, and arts, leſs arbitrary, tho' perhaps more powerful, ſtrew garlands of flowers on their iron fetters, ſmother thoſe ſentiments of original liberty, with which they would ſeem to have been born, make them in love with their ſlavery, and ſo form, what we call, a poliſh'd nation. Neceſſity rais'd thrones; and the arts and ſciences ſupport them---Ye powers of the earth cheriſh all talents, and protect thoſe who cultivate them *: go on ye poliſh'd nations, improve, advance and enlarge them: to them, ye happy ſlaves, you owe that delicacy of taſte you boaſt of, that ſweetneſs of character, and that urbanity of manners, which renders your civil commerce ſo eaſy, ſo flowing, and ſo engaging: in a word, the

* Princes always ſee with pleaſure the taſte for agreeable arts and ſuperfluities take root amongſt their ſubjects, eſpecially when they do not occaſion the exportation of bullion: for beſide that they entertain that narrowneſs of ſoul, which renders them fit for ſlavery, they know well enough that every neceſſary which people create for themſelves is a new fetter for them. *Alexander* having a mind to hold the *Ichthyophages* in ſubjection, forced them to quit their fiſhing, and to live on the ſame meats with others; and the *Savages* of *America* who go naked, and only live by their game, could never be brought to ſubjection. And indeed, what bribe can corrupt a man into ſlavery who wants nothing?

the appearance of every virtue without poſſeſſing one.

'Twas by theſe kind of accompliſhments, which become much the more amiable for their affectation of not appearing, that *Athens* and *Rome* were formerly ſo renown'd in thoſe boaſted days of their magnificence and glory; and it is, no doubt, for the ſame reaſon that our days and our kingdom bear the ſway from all ages and all nations;---An air of philoſophy without pedantry, an addreſs that is natural and yet engaging, equally diſtant from northern ruſticity and *Italian* mimickry: thoſe are the fruits produced by the arts and ſciences, which are ripened and brought to perfection by the commerce of the world.

What a happineſs it would be to live amongſt us, if our exterior appearance were always the true repreſentation of our hearts; if our decency were virtue, if our maxims were the rules of our actions, if true philoſophy were inſeparably annex'd to the title of philoſopher! But ſo many good qualities are not always found together, and virtue ſeldom appears in ſuch pomp and ſtate. Dreſs will ſet forth the man of fortune, and elegance the man of taſte; but the wholeſome robuſt man is known by other marks. The ſtrength and vigour of body are found under the coarſe homely coverings of the labouring peaſant, not under the courtier's embroidery.

broidery. So all ornaments are ſtrangers to virtue, which is the ſtrength and vigour of the ſoul: the honeſt man is a champion who wreſtles ſtark naked; he diſdains all thoſe vile accoutrements which prove only incumbrances, that marr his natural force and activity, and were only firſt invented to hide ſome defect or deformity.

Before art had new moulded our behaviours, and taught our paſſions to talk an affected language, our manners were indeed ruſtick, but ſincere and natural; and the difference of our behaviours in an inſtant diſtinguiſh'd our characters.---'Tis true, that human nature was not then any wiſe better in the main than now: but man found a ſecurity in the eaſe with which he could dive into the thoughts of man; and this advantage, on which we ſeem to ſet no price, exempted them from many vices.

In theſe our days the art of pleaſing is by ſubtil reſearches, and finery of taſte, reduced to certain principles; inſomuch that a vile deceitful uniformity runs thro' our whole ſyſtem of manners: as if all our conſtitutions, all our minds had been caſt in one and the ſame mould.---Politeneſs conſtantly requires, civility commands; we always follow cuſtoms, never our particular inclinations: no one, now a-days, dares to appear what he really is; and in this perpetual conſtraint, the individuals who com-

poſe

poſe the congregation call'd ſociety, being put into the ſame circumſtances, will one and all act in the ſame manner, unleſs ſome more powerful motive intervene. Shall we then never rightly know the man we converſe with? Muſt we, in order to diſtinguiſh the ſincere friend, wait for grand occaſions, I mean till it be too late; for it is for grand occaſions that it were of the higheſt conſequence to know him before-hand.

What a train of vices attend this uncertainty? Friendſhips are inſincere, eſteem is not real, and confidence is ill founded; ſuſpicions, jealouſies, fears, coolneſſes, reſerve, hatred, and treaſons, are hid under the uniform veil of perfidious politeneſs, under that boaſted civility which we owe to the vaſt diſcoveries of our age. 'Tis true, no one will ſwear by the name of the Omnipotent Maſter of the univerſe, 'tis not polite; but he ſhall be blaſphemed in ſpeeches and writings, without offending our ſcrupulous ears. No one will boaſt of his own merit, but he will run down that of his neighbour. No one will outrageouſly inſult his enemy, but he will ſlyly calumniate him; national hatreds will be quench'd, but it will be in the love of our country. The place of deſpiſed ignorance will be occupied by a more deſpicable Pyrrhoniſm. Some exceſſes indeed will be proſcribed, ſome vices diſhonoured; but others will be adorn'd with the dreſs and name of

virtues, which if we have not, we muſt affect to have. Let who will boaſt of the ſobriety of the ſages of our days; for my own part I can perceive nothing but a refinement of intemperance, as unworthy of my approbation as is their artificial ſimplicity *

Such is the purity which our manners have acquired. Thus we are become great and good. Let arts, letters, and ſciences now claim what belongs to them in this noble and ſalutary work.----I ſhall only add one reflection; if the inhabitant of ſome far diſtant region would form an idea of our European manners on the condition in which the ſciences are amongſt us, on the perfection of our arts, on the decency of our publick diverſions, on the politeneſs of our behaviour, on the affability of our converſations, on our perpetual demonſtrations of good-will to each other, and on that tumultuous concourſe of men of all ages, of all conditions, who, from ſun riſe to ſun ſet, ſeem eternally employ'd in obliging one another; would not this ſtranger conclude our manners to be the exact reverſe of what they really are? Where we ſee no effect, 'tis in vain to ſeek for a cauſe; but here the effect is viſible, the

* "I love, ſays *Montagne*, to argue and diſcourſe, but it "is with a few men, and for my own ſake; for to ſerve as "a ſpectacle for the great, or emulouſly make a ſhew of "full wit, I think far beneath a man of honour." *This is the failing of all our fine wits, except one.*

the depravation palpable; our minds have been corrupted in proportion as our arts and ſciences have made advances towards their perfection.----Shall we ſay that this is a miſfortune particular to our times? No, gentlemen, the evils ariſing from our vain curioſity are as old as the world. The flow and ebb of the ſea are not more regularly guided by the moon's courſe, than our manners and probity by that of the arts and ſciences. We ſee virtue flying on one ſide, as their lights riſe on the other of our horizon: and the ſame phænomenon has been obſerved in all times and in all places.

Let us view *Egypt*, the original ſchool of the univerſe, that beautiful, fertile and cloudleſs climate, that celebrated country, whence *Seſoſtris* formerly iſſued to conquer the world. *Egypt* becomes the mother of philoſophy and arts, but ſoon after, the prey of *Cambyſes*, and preſently that of the *Greeks*, the *Romans*, the *Arabs*, and at laſt that of the *Turks*.

See *Greece*, formerly peopled by heroes who twice conquer'd *Aſia*, once at *Troy*, and again at their own doors. Learning, in her infancy, had not yet corrupted the hearts of her inhabitants: but the progreſs of ſciences, the diſſolution of manners, and the *Macedonian* yoke, invaded her, as I may ſay, on the heels of one another: then poor *Greece*, ſtill learned, ſtill voluptuous, ſtill a ſlave, knew no other revolutions but the frequent

changes of her maſters; nor could all the eloquence of *Demoſthenes* revive a body, which luxury and the arts had totally enervated.

It was in the time of *Ennius*, in that of *Terence*, that *Rome*, which had been founded by a ſhepherd and made famous by Ploughmen, began to degenerate; but after, when the *Ovids*, the *Catullus's*, the *Martials*, and that croud of obſcene authors, whoſe names alone are enough to ſhock common modeſty, when they appear'd, *Rome*, from being the temple of virtue, became the theatre of wickedneſs, the averſion of nations, and the ſcoff of *Barbarians*. That great capital of the world falls herſelf under the ſame captivity which ſhe ſo often impos'd on other nations; and the time of her fall was the eve of that day on which ſhe beſtow'd on one of her citizens the title of ſole arbiter of *fine taſte*. What ſhall I ſay of that metropolis of the eaſtern empire, which by its ſituation would ſeem to have had a right of command over the whole world? That refuge of arts and ſciences, after they had been proſcrib'd by the reſt of *Europe* perhaps more through wiſdom than barbarity? All that render corruption and debauchery ſhameful, that can blacken treaſons, murders, and poiſonings; all the concourſe of the moſt atrocious crimes ſeem combin'd together to form the hiſtory of *Conſtantinople*; and yet that is the pure ſource whence have flow'd thoſe floods of light and knowledge ſo boaſted of in our days.

But

But what need we recur to thoſe paſt ages for proofs of this truth whilſt we have living evidences ſubſiſting before our eyes? We have in *Aſia* an immenſe track of land, where learning flouriſhes, and is the beſt qualification for filling the firſt and greateſt places, employments, and dignities of the ſtate. If the ſciences really better'd manners, if they taught man to ſpill his blood for his county, if they heighten'd his courage; the inhabitants of *China* ought to be wiſe, free, and invincible.---But if they are tainted with every vice, familiar with every crime; if neither the ſkill of their magiſtrates, nor the pretended wiſdom of their laws, nor the vaſt multitude of people inhabiting that great extent of empire, could protect or defend them from the yoke of an ignorant *Barbarian Tartar*, of what uſe was all their art, all their ſkill, all their learning? What was the benefit accruing from all the reſpect with which they were adorn'd and honour'd? unleſs that *China* is peopled with ſlaves and cheats.---Let us ſet, in oppoſition to theſe frightful pictures, that of thoſe few countries, who, having the good fortune to have been preſerv'd from the contagion of vain knowledge, have procur'd, by their virtue, happineſs for themſelves, and have prov'd the great examples of all other nations. Such were the firſt *Perſians*, a very ſingular nation, who made virtue their ſtudy, as we do

ſciences; who ſubdued *Aſia* with ſo much eaſe, and who alone had the glory of having the hiſtory of their inſtitutions paſs for a philoſophical romance: ſuch were the *Scythians*, of whom we have ſuch magnificent elogiums: ſuch the *Germans*, whom an able writer, wearied by deſcribing the horrid crimes of an opulent voluptuous learned people, has taken delight to celebrate for their ſimplicity, their innocence, their virtues.--- Such was even *Rome* herſelf in the times of her poverty and ignorance; and ſuch, in ſhort, appear'd, in our own days, that rude unpoliſh'd nation ſo renown'd for courage, which no adverſity could abate, and for loyalty, which example could not corrupt *.

It was not through ſtupidity that theſe preferred the bodily exerciſes to thoſe of the mind; they knew well enough that idlers in other countries paſs their whole lives in diſputes about the *ſummum bonum*, about vice and virtue, and that proud reaſoners, vainly beſtowing praiſes on themſelves, jumbled all other nations under the deſpicable denomination of *Barbarians:* but they have duly conſidered

* I dare not quote thoſe happy nations, who do not even know the names of vices which we labour to reſtrain, thoſe Savages of *America*, whoſe ſimple and natural rules of government, *Montagne*, without heſitation, not only prefers to *Plato*'s laws, but to all that philoſophy can ever invent for making a people live happily together: he quotes many examples which are ſtriking to thoſe who can taſte them.— Ay, but, ſays he, they wear no breeches!

conſidered their lives and manners, and thence deſpiſed their doctrines *.

Can we forget that in the very boſom of *Greece* herſelf there aroſe a city which became famous thro' a happy ignorance, and the wiſdom of her laws? A commonwealth peopled rather by demi-gods than men, ſo far did their virtue outſhine humanity. O *Sparta!* thou proof of the folly of vain learning! whilſt all manner of vice, led by the arts and ſciences were introduced into *Athens*, whilſt a tyrant was buſy in picking up the works of the prince of poets, thou wert chaſing from thy walls all ſciences, all learning, together with their profeſſors.

The ſucceſs of both was thus diſtinguiſhed: *Athens* became the manſion of politeneſs and fine taſte, the ſeat of eloquence and philoſophy; the elegance of their buildings correſponded with that of their language. On all ſides were ſeen the marble and animated canvas freſh from the hands of the greateſt maſters. 'Twas from *Athens* that all thoſe ſurprizing works, which will for ever be models

* In good earneſt I would aſk what opinion the very *Athenians* themſelves had of eloquence, when they baniſh'd oratory with ſo much care from that juſt tribunal, whence the very gods never appeal'd? What did *Rome* think of phyſick, when ſhe thruſt out all phyſicians? And when a little remainder of humanity made the *Spaniards* prohibit all lawyers and their pettifoggers to go into *America*, what muſt have been their notion of the ſcience of law? Would not one imagine they intended, by this ſingle act of bounty, to repair all the evils they pour'd on thoſe unhappy *Indians?*

models for all corrupted ages, have ſprung. The picture of *Lacedæmon* is not ſo brilliant. *There*, ſaid all other nations, *there men are born virtuous, the very air of that country ſeems to inſpire virtue.* Nothing remains of that people but the tradition of their heroick actions. Shall ſuch noble monuments be leſs regarded by us than the curious ſculpture left us by the *Athenians?* It muſt be own'd that ſome wiſe men preſerved their innocence even in the ſeats of the Muſes: but let us hearken to what the firſt and moſt unhappy of them thought of the ſages and artiſts of his time

" I have examined, ſays he, the poets, " and I look upon them as a ſet of men " whoſe talents impoſe upon themſelves and " and others, who would paſs for wiſe, and " are taken for ſuch, without having any " juſt title to wiſdom.

" From the poets, continues *Socrates*, I " turn'd to the artiſts; no one knew leſs of " the arts than I did; no one was more con- " vinced that the artiſts had valuable ſecrets; " and yet I perceived that their condition is " not a whit better than that of the poets, " and that theſe as well as thoſe are much mi- " ſtaken; becauſe the ableſt are excellent in " their way, they therefore imagine them- " ſelves the wiſeſt of men. This preſump- " tion has tainted all their ſkill in my eyes; ſo " that ſetting myſelf in the place of the oracle,

" and

" and queſtioning myſelf which I would
" chuſe to be, what I am, or what they are,
" whether I would know what they learned,
" or know that I know nothing: I anſwered
" myſelf, and the god; let me remain what
" I am.

" Neither the ſophiſts, nor the poets, nor
" the orators, nor the artiſts, nor I, can tell
" what is truth, what is good, or what is
" beautiful; but this difference ſubſiſts be-
" tween us, that tho' theſe people know no-
" thing, they all imagine the contrary;
" whilſt I am in no doubt about my igno-
" rance; ſo that all this ſuperiority of wiſ-
" dom allowed me by the oracle, amounts
" to no more than that I am convinced of
" my ignorance of what I don't know."

Thus we hear *Socrates*, whom the judgments of the gods had pronounced the wiſeſt of men, whoſe ſuperiority in learning all *Greece* acknowledged, we hear *Socrates* celebrating the happineſs of ignorance! can you believe that, if he came to life again, our preſent artiſts and lovers of ſcience could make him retract his opinion? No, gentlemen, that juſt man would continue to deſpiſe your ſciences, he never would mix in that croud of writers who drown us in a flood of learning which flows from every quarter of the compaſs; he would only leave *us* his diſciples, to *us* and our children's children as he formerly did, the example and memory of his virtues. 'Tis thus mankind is

to

to be glorioufly inſtructed! *Socrates* begun in *Athens*, old *Cato* continued in *Rome* to cry out againſt thoſe artful, thoſe ſubtile *Greeks*, who corrupted and ſoftened the courage of their fellow citizens; but the ſciences, the arts, and ſchool learning ſtill carried the day: *Rome* was filled with philoſophers and orators, military diſcipline was neglected, agriculture deſpiſed, ſects were embraced, and the country quite forgotten: the names of *Epicurus*, *Zeno*, *Arceſilaus*, drove off the ſcene thoſe of ſacred liberty, diſintereſtedneſs, and obedience; *Since men of learning*, ſaid ſome of their own philoſophers, *have appeared among us*, honeſty has been quite eclips'd---till then *Rome* was contented with the practice of virtue; all was loſt when it became a ſtudy.-- O *Fabricious!* if by any unlucky chance thou couldſt come again to life, how would thy great ſoul bear the pompous ſight of that *Rome* which was ſaved by thy valour, and which thy ſingle name has more adorned than all her conqueſts? Would'ſt thou not cry, "O ye gods! where "are thoſe plain, ſimple, homely habita- "tions, where honeſty, moderation, and "virtue dwelt heretofore? what deſtructive "ſplendor is this that has ſucceeded our *Ro-* "*man* ſimplicity? what ſtrange dialect is "this now in faſhion? what means this "effeminate behaviour? of what uſe are all "thoſe ſtatues, pictures, edifices? O ye mad

"unhappy

" unhappy ſouls! what have you done? " You that were maſters of the world have " reduced yourſelves to become ſlaves to " thoſe idle and frivolous people whom " you conquer'd? You are governed by pe- " dants: was it for architects, for painters, " for ſtatuaries, for players, that you were " ſo prodigal of your blood through all " *Greece*, through all *Aſia*? The ſpoils of " *Carthage* are become the prey of fidlers! " Quick, quick, ye *Romans*, down with thoſe " amphitheatres, daſh all thoſe marbles to " pieces, burn thoſe pictures, chace away " thoſe ſlaves who make you ſlaves; and " whoſe deteſtable arts have quite corrupted " you. Let other ſtates become famous by " their vain talents; that which alone is " worthy of *Rome* is to conquer the world " and ſet virtue on its thrones. When *Cy-* " *neas* took our ſenate for an aſſembly of " kings, he neither was dazzled by an emp- " ty pomp, nor by any ſtudied elegance " in his reception; he heard not one word " of that eloquence, which is become the " delight and ſtudy of light ſouls. What " then did *Cyneas* ſee that look'd ſo majeſtic? " O my fellow citizens! he ſaw what nei- " ther your riches nor your arts could ever " produce; the nobleſt ſight that ever ap- " peared under the ſun, an aſſembly of two " hundred virtuous men, worthy of com- " manding *Rome*, and governing the whole " earth."

But

But let us come home from theſe rambles through diſtant countries and ages long ſince paſt, and let us view what paſs'd in our own nations, and almoſt in our own times; or rather let us draw a veil over ſome odious pictures, which would ſhock our modern delicacy, and let us not be at the pains of repeating over the ſame things under different names. 'Twas not in vain I invoked the ſhade of *Fabricius*; but what words did I lend him that could not as well be put into the mouths of our *Lewis* XII. or *Henry* IV?

'Tis true that, amongſt us, *Socrates* had not been obliged to drink the poiſon, but a bitterer cup had been impoſed on him, that of ſcoff, ſcorn, and diſdain, which are more intolerable than even death itſelf. Thus have luxury, diſſolution, and ſlavery been the chaſtiſements of our proud endeavours of emerging out of that happy ignorance in which the eternal Wiſdom had placed us. One would think that the deep clouds, with which he ſkreens his operations, might warn us that we are not made to pry into his ſecrets. But is there one of his leſſons that we turn to our advantage, or that we neglect without puniſhment? Know man, once for all, that nature deſigned to preſerve you from knowledge, as a mother ſnatches the dangerous weapon from the infant's hands; that all the ſecrets hid from you are ſo many evils ſhe would preſerve you from, and that the pains,

labours,

labours, and difficulties you undergo in the road to ſcience, are ſo many effects of her goodneſs towards you; man is now perverſe enough, but he would be more ſo, if he came knowing to the world.

How humbling theſe reflections are to humanity! what a mortification to our pride! What! is probity the child of ignorance? are ſcience and virtue incompatible? what conſequences may be drawn from theſe ſurmiſes?---- But to reconcile theſe ſeeming contradictions, no more is neceſſary but narrowly to enquire into the vanity, into the nothingneſs of thoſe glittering titles that dazzle us, and which we ſo eaſily beſtow on human knowledge. Let us therefore conſider the arts and ſciences in themſelves, let us weigh what reſults from their progreſs, and let us not heſitate to agree in all the points wherein our reaſonings ſhall agree with hiſtorical facts.

The SECOND PART.

THERE was an ancient tradition which paſs'd from *Egypt* into *Greece*, that ſome God, an enemy to the hapineſs of man, had been the inventer of the ſciences *. What

* The alegory of the fable of *Prometheus* is eaſily perceived, and it does not appear that the *Grecians*, who nail'd him on *Caucaſus*, thought much more favourably of him than the *Egyptians* did of their god, *Teuthus*. "A Satyr, ſays an "ancient fable, would faink iſs and embrace the fire; but "*Prometheus* cried out to him, Satyr, thou ſhalt weep for the "beard of thy chin, for that burns all that touches it."

What opinion then muſt *Egypt* herſelf, whence they ſprung, have had of them? Thoſe people had a nearer view of the cauſes that produced them. And indeed, whether we turn over the annals of the world, or ſupply the defects of uncertain chronicles by philoſophical ſearches, we ſhall not find that the origin of human knowledge anſwers, in any degree, the ideas we form of it: aſtronomy was begot by ſuperſtition, eloquence ſprung from ambition, hatred, flattery, and falſhood; geometry is a child of avarice, phyſics roſe from vain curioſity; and all, even morality itſelf, are effects of human pride. The arts and ſciences then owe their birth to our vices; we ſhould be leſs in doubt of their uſe and advantage had they ſprung from our virtues. The ſtains of their origin but too plainly appear in their objects. What ſhould we do with arts and ſciences without that luxury which feeds them? If men were juſt we ſhould need no law-learning. What would hiſtory become, if we had neither tyrants, wars, nor conſpirators? Who, in a word, would paſs his days in barren contemplations, if each particular, only conſulting the duties of man, and neceſſities of nature, had but juſt time enough to mind his country, to ſuccour the diſtreſs'd, and provide for his family? Were we made, think you, to die peeping into the deep well whither truth is retired? This thought alone

ought

ought to deter every man from ſeriouſly attempting to be inſtructed by the ſtudy of philoſophy.

What difficulties! what dangers! what deceitful paths are met with in the ſearch of ſcience? Through how many errors, a thouſand times more dangerous than truth herſelf is uſeful, muſt we paſs to come at her? The diſadvantage is obvious, for falſehood is ſuſceptible of infinite combinations, whilſt Truth has but one way of being. But who is it that in down-right earneſt ſeeks truth? and even granting all the ſincerity imaginable in enquiry, by what marks are we ſure of knowing her? In ſuch a wilderneſs of different opinions, is there * a certain ſtandard to meaſure her by? And what is ſtill harder, if, by good luck, Truth can be found at laſt, which of us knows to make the proper uſe of her? If our ſciences are frivolous in the object they have in view, they are ſtill more dangerous by the effects they produce. Born in idleneſs they ſupport it in their turn; and the irreparable loſs of time is the firſt prejudice they do ſociety. To do no good is a great evil, as well in politicks as in morals; and every uſeleſs citizen may

* The leſs a man knows the more he thinks himſelf learned. Did the Peripatetick doubt of nothing? Did not *Deſcartes* make up the univerſe of cubes and whirlwinds? And is there this day in *Europe* a dabler in phyſicks but will boldly explain the profaned myſtery of electricity, which perhaps the true philoſophers may for ever deſpair of?

may be conſidered as a pernicious man. Anſwer me then, you renown'd philoſopher, you by whom we know how bodies attract each other in a void; in what proportions the planets revolve in equal times, what arches have conjoined into points of inflection and retortion; how man ſees all things in God; how the ſoul and body correſpond without communication like two clocks, what ſtar may be inhabited, what inſects reingender themſelves in an extraordinary manner; anſwer me, I ſay, you from whom we have all this knowledge, if you had been pleaſed never to have taught us all theſe fine things, ſhould we be therefore leſs numerous, worſe governed, leſs feared, leſs flouriſhing, or more perverſe than we are? Give up then the importance of your productions; and if the works of the moſt clear-ſighted of our ſcholars, and of our beſt members are of ſo little uſe to us, be pleaſed to tell me what we are to think of thoſe crouds of obſcure writers and learned idlers. who like drones, devour the ſubſtance of the induſtrious.

But why do I call them idlers? would to heaven they were ſuch! our manners had been wholſomer and the ſociety more peaceable.

Now thoſe vain empty declamers are found in all places and corners armed with their deſtructive paradoxes, dragging up faith by the roots, and annihilating virtue. They diſdainfully

diſdainfully ſmile at thoſe unfaſhionable words, our *country*, our *religion*; and dedicate their talents and philoſophy to the deſtruction and vilification of all that is moſt ſacred and valuable to mankind; not that in the main they are enemies to our tenets and virtue; they only hate all publick opinions: for no more is neceſſary to bring them on their knees to our altars, than an act to baniſh them to the land of Atheiſts. O thou rage of being particular! to what exceſſes doſt thou lead unhappy man?---- The abuſe of time is a great evil, and yet much greater attend letters and arts, ſuch as luxury, deſcending like them from idleneſs and vanity. Luxury is ſeldom, very ſeldom ſeen, but in company with arts and ſciences; but arts and ſciences are never met without their conſtant attendant luxury. I know well enough that our philoſophy, always fruitful in ſingular inventions, will maintain, againſt the experience of all ages, that luxury forms the ſplendor of ſtates: but if we paſs by the neceſſity of ſumptuary laws, will that philoſophy dare affirm that good manners are not eſſential to the duration of empires, and that luxury is not diametrically oppoſite to good manners? Let luxury be the certain ſign of riches, let it alſo, if you will, be a means to multiply them: what can be concluded from this paradox ſo worthy of our days? And what ſhall become of virtue when we are en-

couraged to grow rich at any rate ?--- Antient politicians always converſed on manners and virtue, the moderns only of commerce and money: one ſhall tell you, that ſuch a man is worth more in ſuch a place than he could be ſold for at *Algiers:* another figuring by the ſame rule, ſhall find you countries where a man is not worth a penny, and others where his value is leſs than nothing; mankind are appraiſed, like a herd of cattle, according to them a man is worth no more than what he conſumes in his commonwealth: By this rule one *Sybarite* were worth thirty *Lacedæmonians*; now gueſs which of theſe ſtates, *Sparta* or *Sybaris*, was ſubdued by a handful of peaſants, and which made all *Aſia* tremble.

Cyrus's monarchy was overturned with thirty-thouſand men, by a prince that was not ſo rich as the pooreſt of the *Perſian Satrapes*; and the *Scythians*, the moſt deſpicable of all nations, reſiſted the moſt powerful monarchs of the univerſe. Two famous republicks ſtruggled hard for the empire of the world, one was exceeding rich, the other extremely poor; and yet 'twas this that ſubdued and deſtroyed her enemy. *Rome* herſelf, in her turn, after having ſwallowed up all the riches of the univerſe, became a prey to *Barbarians*, who did not ſo much as know what riches were. The *Franks* conquered the *Gauls*, the *Saxons England*, and that without

out any other treaſures but their valour and their poverty; a troop of poor mountaineers, whoſe wiſhes extended no further than the poſſeſſion of a few ſheep-ſkins, after having humbled the *Auſtrian* pride, cruſh'd the rich and formidable houſe of *Burgundy*, of which all *Europe* ſtood in ſuch awe. In fine, all the power and wiſdom of *Charles* the Fifth's heir, back'd with all the wealth of *India*, were baffled by a handful of herring-fiſhers. Let our politicians ſuſpend awhile their calculations, meditate on theſe examples, and confeſs once for all that every thing is to be purchaſed for money, except manners and patriots.

What are we debating about in this queſtion concerning luxury? is it not whether it be of greater conſequence to an empire to be rich, brillant, and ſhort liv'd, or virtuous and laſting? I ſay brillant, but how brillant? Ah! ſtate, pomp, and pride are never found where decency preſides: no, it is not poſſible that thoſe who degrade their minds with empty cares, can ever riſe to any thing that is truly great or glorious; for even if they had ſtrength enough, their courage would fail them.

Every artiſt would be applauded, and the applauſes of contemporaries are the moſt precious part of his recompence. What muſt he do then to obtain them? If he has the misfortune to be born among a people, and in

an age, where learning having become a fashion, every idle youth is put in a condition of deciding and pronouncing; where the men have ſacrificed their * taſte to the tyrants of their liberty; where one of the ſexes, not daring to approve what does not bear a proportion to the puſillanimity of the other, muſt conſent to blaſt ſome maſter-pieces of dramatick poetry, and reject ſome prodigies of harmony? What muſt he do, gentlemen? he muſt lower his genius to the level of the age, and rather apply to mean things which will raiſe admiration in his own days, than attempt at ſublime works which will only ſhine long after his deceaſe.

Tell us, thou celebrated *Voltaire*, how many nervous energick ſentiments thou haſt been forced to ſacrifice to our falſe delicacy, and

* I am far from thinking this aſcendant of women an evil in itſelf, 'tis a preſent made them by nature for the good of mankind; if it were well conducted it would produce as much good as it now does evil; we don't rightly judge of what advantage it would be to ſociety, to give proper education to that half of our ſpecies which governs the other. Men will always be what women pleaſe; if therefore you would have them become great and virtuous, you muſt teach the woman what greatneſs of ſoul and virtue are. The reflections which this ſubject furniſhes, and which *Plato* formerly made, would deſerve to be made clearer by ſome pen worthy of following ſo great a maſter, and defending ſo great a cauſe.

This note of the author's ſeems to contradict his own hypotheſis, whilſt he runs down all learning, he would have ſome one to write learnedly, to procure learning for women, from which it is eaſy to prove that they are barr'd by nature, by only conſidering the plain uſes and occupations for which ſhe deſign'd them. *Tranſlator's Note.*

and at what an expence of noble ideas thou haſt complied with the preſent ſpirit of gallantry ſo productive of mean ones? 'Tis thus that a diſſolution in manners, the neceſſary effect of luxury, cauſes a corruption of taſte. If by chance any one of thoſe, famous for their talents, happens to have a ſtrength of mind capable of diſdaining to comply with the cuſtom of the times, by debaſing his genius into boyiſh productions, woe be to him! he will certainly die in want and oblivion. O that what I here ſay were only a prediction, and not the effect of a certain experience!

Carlo, *Peter*, the time is come when that pencil, which was deſtin'd to augment the majeſty of our temples with ſublime and holy images, ſhall fall from thy hand; or worſe, ſhall be proſtituted to adorn ſkreens and bowers with laſcivious pictures. And thou, inimitable *Pigal*, thou rival of *Praxiteles* and *Phidias*; thou whom the antients would have employed to ſhape them out gods, which by their beauty might almoſt excuſe their idolatry; thy chiſel muſt be debaſed to the hewing down the bellies of baboons, or be content to remain idle.

One cannot think at all of manners, without taking delight in conſidering the ſimplicity of primitive times; it is a beautiful coaſt deck'd by the hands of nature, towards which we ſtill turn our eyes, whilſt with regret, we find ourſelves moving from it. When

innocent and virtuous men made the gods witneſſes of their actions, they liv'd together in the ſame huts; but ſo ſoon as they became wicked, they grew weary of ſuch ſpectators, and baniſhed them to magnificent temples. Then they turned out their divinities to lodge themſelves, or at leaſt no difference was left betwixt the temples and the dwellings of citizens. That was the pitch of depravation, and vice was never carried to ſuch a height as when it appeared ſupported, if I may ſo expreſs it, on the gates of palaces, by marble pillars and engraven on Corinthian capitals.

Whilſt the conveniencies of life are multiplying, the arts advancing, and luxury ſpreading, true courage weakens, military virtue decays, and it is the buſineſs of the arts and ſciences that is tranſacted even in the darkeſt cabinets. When the *Goths* ravaged *Greece*, all the libraries only eſcaped the fire, by the opinion of one of them, who adviſed that their enemies ſhould be left utenſils which may amuſe them from military exerciſes, and entertain them with idle and ſedentary occupations. *Charles* the VIIIth ſaw himſelf maſter of *Tuſcany* and the kingdom of *Naples*, without almoſt one ſword being drawn; and all his court attributed this unexpected ſucceſs to the attention with which the *Italian* princeſs and nobles ſtudied to become learned and wiſe, rather than vigorous and warlike.

warlike. So true it is, ſays the man of ſenſe who tells this ſtory, that in martial affairs the ſtudy of ſciences is much more apt to ſoften and unbend our courage, than to ſtrengthen and animate it.

The *Romans* have owned, that military virtue was diminiſhing in the ſame proportion that their taſte for pictures, ſculpture and wrought plate was increaſing, and the arts improving amongſt them; and as if that famous country had been deſtined for ever to ſtand a guide to all others, the elevation of the *Medeci's*, and the re-eſtabliſhment of letters, have once more, perhaps for ever, deſtroyed that reputation for war which *Italy* ſeem'd to have recovered ſome ages ago.

The antient republicks of *Greece*, prompted by the ſame wiſdom which is obſervable in their inſtitutions, prohibited all ſedentary ſlothful trades, which by corrupting and weakening the body, ſoon enervate the vigour of the ſoul. How can it be expected that men, whom the leaſt want diſpirits, whom the leaſt labour diſguſts, can face hunger, thirſt, fatigues, dangers and death? With what courage think you can ſoldiers undertake exceſſive hardſhips, who never were accuſtomed to any? With what ardour can they force their foot marches under officers, who have hardly the ſtrength to ride ſo far? None muſt object the acknowledged bravery of our modern warriers ſo artfully diſciplined

I hear their valour much applauded on the day of battle, but I am not told how they ſupport exceſſive labour, how they reſiſt the rigour of ſeaſons, and intemperance of climates; a little too much heat or cold, or the privation of a few ſuperfluities, are enough in a very few days to diſſolve and melt away the very beſt of our armies. Ye intrepid warriors liſten for once to a truth which you ſeldom hear: you are brave, I own it; you had triumph'd with *Hannibal* at *Cannæ* and the *Traſimenian* lake; *Cæſar*, with you, had paſs'd the *Rubicon* and enſlaved his country; but it is not with you that the firſt could paſs the *Alps*, or the other conquer your anceſtors. The field decides not always the ſucceſs of the war, and the general muſt have another art ſuperior even to that of gaining battles. One may run with intrepidity to the mouths of cannons, and yet be a bad officer: in the very ſoldier a little more ſtrength and vigour of body may, perhaps, be more neceſſary than all that bravery which guards him not from death; and is it not equal to the ſtate whether its troops fall by fevers and colds, or by the enemy's ſwords?---If cultivating the ſciences be hurtful to the qualities neceſſary for war, it is more ſo to thoſe requiſite for morals; 'tis from our childhood that a ſenſeleſs education, in adorning our wit, corrupts our underſtandings. I ſee on all ſides immenſe

eſtabliſhments

eſtabliſhments and foundations for rearing youth to the knowledge of all things except their real duties; your children know not a word of their own language, but they can talk others which are no where in uſe: they ſhall compoſe you verſes which they hardly underſtand; without being able to diſtinguiſh truth from error, they ſhall poſſeſs the art of ſo confounding them by ſpecious arguments, that they puzzle the plain ſenſible by-ſtanders: but thoſe glorious words, Magnanimity, Equity, Temperance, Humanity, Fortitude, alas! they know not what they ſignify: they never hear the ſound *Country* pronounc'd; and if the name of God ſtrikes their ears, 'tis more to terrify than to inſtill true fear. I ſhould have been as well pleaſed, ſaid a wiſe man, that my ſcholar had paſs'd his hours in a Tennis-court, where at leaſt his body might become more ſupple. I know children muſt be occupied, and that idleneſs is their greateſt danger. But what ſhall they learn? A fine queſtion! why what they are to *do*, not what they are to *forget*, when they grow up*.

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* Such was the *Spartan* education, as the greateſt of their kings reports; it is, ſays *Montagne*, worthy of great conſideration, that in the excellent rules of *Lycurgus*, which are indeed monſtrous in their perfection, and ſo careful of the rearing and nouriſhing children as being the principal point, and in the very ſeat of the Muſes, there ſhould be ſo little mention of their learning, as if that generous youth deſpiſing all other ſubjection, inſtead of our maſters of knowledge, ſhould only have teachers of valour, prudence, and juſtice.

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Our gardens are adorn'd with ſtatues, and our galleries with paintings. What, think you, do thoſe maſter-pieces of art, expos'd thus to publick admiration, repreſent? Perhaps the great men who gloriouſly defended the liberty of their country? Or thoſe ſtill greater who inriched it with their virtues? No, no, they are the images of all the paths where reaſon and the heart may ſtray, diligently copy'd from heathen divinity, early to be preſented to the curioſity of our children; on purpoſe, no doubt, that they may fix their eyes on thoſe models of evil actions even before they can read.

Whence

Let us now ſee what the ſame author ſpeaks of the antient *Perſians*; *Plato*, ſays he, tells us that the eldeſt ſon in ſucceſſion to the crown, was thus rear'd; at his birth he was given, not to women, but to the king's chief eunuchs on account of their virtue: theſe were charged with the health and beauty of his body; and at ſeven years of age made him begin to ride and hunt: when he was fourteen they gave him up to four people, the wiſeſt, the juſteſt, the moſt temperate, and the moſt valiant of all the nation; the firſt taught him religion, the ſecond truth, the third to command his paſſions, and the fourth to fear nothing. *Aſtyages*, in *Xenophon*, aſks *Cyrus* what his laſt leſſon was; *Cyrus* anſwers, that in the ſchool, a big boy having too ſhort a gown, gave it to one of his companions who was of a leſs ſize, and took from him his, which fitted: our preceptor having made me judge of this debate, I decreed they ſhould remain as they now ſtood, and that each was now well fitted. Upon which he told me I did ill, for that I only was ſway'd by what ſeemed convenient, and that I ought firſt to have conſidered what was juſt, and I ſhould find that no one ſhould be diſpoſſeſs'd of his property by violence; and added, that he was puniſh'd in the ſame manner as if he had neglected his leſſon. My regent muſt compoſe an eloquent oration, *in genere demonſtrativo*, before he can convince me that his ſchool is equal to that.

Whence ariſe all theſe abuſes, if not from that fatal inequality introduced among men by the diſtinction of talents and fall of virtue? There are the moſt evident effects of all our ſtudies, and the moſt dangerous of all their conſequences. No one now aſks, whether a man has probity, but whether he has talents; nor whether that book be uſeful, but whether it be well written. Prodigal rewards attend wit, but virtue may ſtarve. We have many prizes for fine diſcourſes, but none for fine actions.

And yet let me be fairly anſwered, whether the glory attached to that diſcourſe on this occaſion, which ſhall be honoured with the approbation of ſuperiority by this learned academy, can be, in any degree, comparable to the merit of thoſe who have eſtabliſhed the *Præmium?*---The wiſe man ſeeks not the favours of fortune, tho' he be not inſenſible to glory; but when he ſees it ſo partially diſtributed, his virtue, which a little emulation had enlivened, and rendered ſerviceable to his ſociety, languiſhes and quenches in miſery and oblivion. This is what, in time, the preference given to agreeable talents, before the uſeful, moſt produce, and what a fatal experience has but too plainly proved ſince the advancement of ſciences and of arts. ---We have indeed phyſicians, geometricians, chemiſts, aſtronomers, poets, muſicians, and painters; we have every thing but good citi-

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zens and patriots; or if ſome few remain diſperſed in our deſerts, they may periſh in their baniſhment, abandoned, neglected, and deſpis'd: ſuch is the condition to which thoſe who give us bread and milk to our children are reduced.

And yet I own the evil is not come to the pitch to which it might have riſen. The eternal Orderer of all things, by placing a ſalutary ſimple near every poiſonous plant, and in the bodies of venomous creatures an antidote for their deadly ſtings and bites, has taught the ſovereigns and rulers of the earth, his miniſters, to imitate his wiſdom. It was to follow this example that the great monarch, whoſe glory will but acquire freſh luſtre in every future age, has eſtabliſhed theſe renowned ſocieties, to whoſe charge are committed, at once, the dangerous truſt of human knowledge, and the ſacred treaſure of manners, both which not only ſhine amongſt themſelves in an eminent degree, but are required in every particular member, before he can be received.----Theſe wiſe inſtitutions, confirmed by his auguſt ſucceſſor, and imitated by all the kings in *Europe*, will at leaſt be ſome check to the letter'd fraternity, whoſe preſumption will, no doubt, prompt them to aſpire at the honour of being received; for they muſt keep a watchful eye on their behaviour, and attempt to become worthy by uſeful writings and ſtrict manners.

Thoſe

Thoſe academies, who honour literary merit with præmiums, will always make choice of ſuch ſubjects as may rouze the love of virtue in the hearts of their countrymen; will always ſhew that it reigns amongſt themſelves, and will give the people in general the rare and delightful pleaſure of ſeeing learned ſocieties devote themſelves to the entertainment and inſtruction of mankind. Let no one make the obvious objection; for it is a new proof of what I advance. The extraordinary care taken by thoſe aſſemblies, ſhew too plainly how neceſſary they are, for no remedies are ſought for where no diſorders are known.---But why are even theſe, by their inſufficiency, numbered amongſt the common ineffectual efforts of reforming mankind? Why truly becauſe ſo many eſtabliſhments render the objects of ſcience more precarious by the diverſity of opinions, whilſt they inveigle us into the thirſt of knowledge. One would imagine, by the precautions taken, that we had too many labourers, and that we feared a ſcarcity of philoſophers: I will not hazard in this place the compariſon between agriculture and philoſophy; it would not be borne with: but I will aſk what philoſophy is? What do the writings of the moſt famous philoſophers contain? What are the leſſons given by thoſe teachers of wiſdom? Would not a man be apt to take them for a parcel of montebanks, who each from his

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ſtage would be heard crying, "Come to me, "I am the only man who will not cheat "you?" One tells me there is no ſuch thing as body or matter, all are mere repreſentations: The next, that there is no being but matter, and no God but the world: Another maintains, that there is no ſuch thing as virtue or vice, and that moral good and evil are chimeras: And yet a fourth aſſerts, that men are wolves, and may devour each other with a ſafe conſcience. O ye mighty ſages! why don't you keep theſe inſtructions for your private friends and children? you might have had what reward they pleaſed, and we had been ſafe from the contagious impertinence of your doctrines.

Yet theſe are the men, the wonderful men, who were overwhelm'd, when living, by the admiration beſtowed on them, and for whom alone it would ſeem that immortality, after their deaths, was reſerved! Theſe are the wiſe maxims which we have received from them, and which we muſt piouſly tranſmit from age to age to our poſterity. Did Paganiſm, tho' tainted with all the errors human nature is capable of, leave their deſcendants any thing comparable to the ſhameful monuments prepared for ours by the preſs, in the reign of the Goſpel? The impious writings of *Leucippus* and *Diagoras* periſh'd with themſelves. The art of eternizing

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the extravagancies of human wit were not yet invented.

But thanks to typographical characters*, and the uſe we make of them, the pernicious doatings of our *Hobbs's* and *Spinoſa's* will laſt for ever. Go, famous writings, of which the ruſticity and ignorance of our forefathers had never been capable; hand down to lateſt ages thoſe ſtill more dangerous works, that exhale the corruption of our manners in this; and forget not at the ſame time to inform them, thro' every generation, of the vaſt advantages which the progreſs of arts and ſciences has procured us. If they read you, you will leave them in no doubt concerning our preſent debate; unleſs they prove ſtill greater fools than we are, they will

* To conſider the horrid diſorders which the preſs has already cauſed in *Europe*, to judge of what may happen, by the progreſs this evil makes every day, one may eaſily foreſee that princes muſt take as much pains to root up this deſtructive weed as ever they did to plant it. *Achmet*, the Sultan, yielding to the importunities of ſome pretended wits, conſented that a preſs ſhould be eſtabliſhed at *Conſtantinople*; but it was no ſooner finiſhed than he was forced to demoliſh it, and ordered the inſtruments to be thrown into a well. It is ſaid, that the Calife Omar being aſk'd what ſhould be done with the library of *Alexandria*, anſwered in theſe terms, If the books of that library contain doctrines oppoſite to the Alcoran, they muſt be burnt as bad; if they agree with the Alcoran they are ſuperfluous, and therefore muſt be burnt. Our learned have quoted this ſaying as the higheſt of abſurdities; and yet let us put Pope *Gregory* the Great in *Omar's* place, and the Goſpel in that of the Alcoran, the library would be burnt, and perhaps that ſingle action would be deem'd to eclipſe all the nobleſt parts of that great pontif's life.

will lift their hands to heaven, and cry, with a bitterneſs of ſoul, "O Almighty God, "thou who hold'ſt all things in thy graſp, "deliver us from the learning and deſtruc-"tive arts of our fathers, and give us back "our ignorance, our innocence, and our "poverty, the only gifts that make us hap-"py, and are precious in thy ſight."

But if the advancement of ſciences and arts has added nothing to our real felicity; if it has corupted our manners, and if the corruption of manners has damaged the purity of taſte, what ſhall we think of that croud of elementary authors who have levelled the road to the temple of the Muſes, and removed all the difficulties which nature had placed as barriers to prohibit vulgar acceſs, and try the ſtrength of thoſe who may be tempted to ſearch for knowledge?

What ſhall we think of thoſe indiſcreet compilers, who have burſt open the gates of ſcience, and introduced, even into the ſanctuary, a mob, ſo unworthy of approaching it? were it not rather to be wiſh'd that thoſe who can never make great advances in learning, had been arreſted at the entrance and forced to apply to ſomething more uſeful to ſociety? He who to his death will continue a miſerable verſificator, or a ſecond rate mathematician, might perhaps have made a figure in manufactory. Thoſe whom

whom nature deſtined for her diſciples, had no need of other maſters: the *Verulams*, *Deſcartes*, *Newtons*, thoſe teachers of mankind, had none themſelves; and who indeed could guide them through the vaſt flights of their own genius's? Common maſters had only narrowed their underſtandings, by crouding them up into the ſmall compaſs of ſchool capacity: 'twas the firſt obſtacles that rouſed them into ſuch efforts as carried them into immenſity, through which they dared to travel. If any one muſt be permitted the ſtudy of arts and ſciences, it ſhould be only thoſe who find ſtrength enough of ſoul within them, to walk alone in the footſteps of thoſe wonderful men, and even to outſtrip them in the glorious career; thoſe few ſhould be left to erect monuments to the honour of the human underſtanding. But if you expect that nothing be above their capacities, you muſt leave no recompence above their hopes: that is all the encouragement they want; the ſoul will inſenſibly proportion itſelf to the objects that occupy it, and great opportunities form great men. The prince of orators was a conſul in *Rome*, and perhaps the greateſt of philoſophers, Lord High Chancellor of *England*. Can you think that if the one had only degrees in an univerſity, and the other but a ſmall academical penſion; can you think, I ſay, but their works

would ſavour of their conditions? Let kings then not diſdain to admit into their councils ſuch men as are capable of good advice. Let them renounce that vulgar error, invented by the pride of the great, that the art of ruling a people is more difficult than that of inſtructing them; as if it were eaſier to engage men to do their duties by fair means, than to compel them to it. Let the learned of the firſt rank find an honourable protection in their courts; let them there obtain the only recompence worthy of them; that of contributing, by their credit, to the happineſs of thoſe whom they had made wiſe by their inſtructions. 'Tis then, then only we ſhall ſee the united power of virtue, ſcience, and authority animated by a noble emulation, and labouring in concert for the happineſs of mankind. But whilſt power remains alone on one ſide, and knowledge on the other; the learned will ſeldom think of great matters, the princes ſeldom perform great actions, and the people muſt continue to be vile, corrupted, and unhappy.---For our parts, who are but of the vulgar herd, whom heaven has not gifted with theſe rare talents, nor deſtined for ſo much glory, let us remain in our obſcurity. Let us not purſue the phantom of reputation, which will eſcape us, and which, altho' we were even every way intitled to it, as matters now go, would never make us amends for

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our labour. Why ſhould we look for happineſs in the opinion of others, if we find it within ourſelves? Let us leave them the care of inſtructing the people in their duties, and be content with minding our own; that will be learning enough for us.

O virtue! thou ſublime ſcience of ſimple ſouls! need we be at ſuch pains to diſcover thee? Are not thy principles engraven on every heart? to learn thy precepts we need only turn our eyes inward on ourſelves, and hearken to the voice of conſcience commanding ſilence to our paſſions? This is true philoſophy, let us learn to be content with it; and without envying the glory of thoſe great men who immortalize themſelves in the republick of letters, let us attempt to ſet between them and us, that glorious diſtinction which was formerly made between two great nations; that the ſpeeches of the one were beautiful, and the actions of the other.

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